



Texas Education Agency

Commissioner Mike Morath

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## Notice of Special Accreditation Investigation

TBD

Mark White, Board President  
Spring Hill Independent School District  
3101 Spring Hill Road  
Longview, Texas 75605

**NO RESPONSE REQUIRED**

John Borens, Board Vice-President  
Spring Hill Independent School District  
3101 Spring Hill Road  
Longview, Texas 75605

Frank Bufkin, Board Member  
Spring Hill Independent School District  
3101 Spring Hill Road  
Longview, Texas 75605

Karen Wright, Board Secretary  
Spring Hill Independent School District  
3101 Spring Hill Road  
Longview, Texas 75605

Mike Henry, Board Member  
Spring Hill Independent School District  
3101 Spring Hill Road  
Longview, Texas 75605

Brad Rogers, Board Member  
Spring Hill Independent School District  
3101 Spring Hill Road  
Longview, Texas 75605

Rod Townsend, Interim Superintendent  
Spring Hill Independent School District  
3101 Spring Hill Road  
Longview, Texas 75605

Ben Shelton, Board Member  
Spring Hill Independent School District  
3101 Spring Hill Road  
Longview, Texas 75605

**Subject: Notice of Special Accreditation Investigation**

Dear Mr. White and Mr. Townsend:

This letter serves to notify the Spring Hill Independent School District of a Special Accreditation Investigation to be conducted by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The Commissioner of Education has authorized this investigation in response to an initial review conducted by the TEA's Special Investigations Unit. This investigation will be conducted by the TEA Special Investigations Unit.

### **Allegations and Description of Complaints**

Board Trustees Frank Bufkin and Mike Henry violated their fiduciary duties as board members with the Spring Hill Independent School District in their involvement in the purchase of the scoreboard by not disclosing on their Conflicts Disclosure Statements of any actual or potential conflicts with the district, which is a violation of Texas Local Government Code §176.003.

Board Trustees Frank Bufkin and Mike Henry violated their fiduciary duties as board members with the Spring Hill Independent School District in their involvement in the purchase of the scoreboard by not disclosing their business interests and/or by not abstaining from further participation in the matter, by having continued discussions with the Board regarding the scoreboard and/or voting at the School Board Meetings regarding School board issues & items, which is a violation of Texas Local Government Code §171.004.

The Spring Hill Independent School District did not follow the district's written procedures in contract procurement in the purchase of the scoreboard, which is a violation of Texas Education Code §44.031.

### **Procedures**

By this notice, TEA has initiated a Special Accreditation Investigation. The agency staff will gather information from a variety of sources. While the agency staff will initiate a preliminary investigation, certain investigative activities may be performed onsite at a later date. The onsite component may include interviews, observations, inspection, evaluation, and collection of records. A full explanation of the agency's complaint investigation procedures is enclosed for your reference.

### **Requests for Information**

**Submission Deadline: N/A**

Additional information is not required at this time.

### **Authority**

This investigation is conducted under the following authorities:

TEC §39.057 (a)(6)

### **Referral to Other Agencies**

During the course of this investigation, TEA may discover matters that warrant immediate attention or identify concerns that are not within its jurisdiction and authority to address. TEA will make referrals to the proper agency, as deemed necessary.

### **Confidentiality and Public Information Requests**

Please note that until TEA finalizes its investigation report, the information gathered for the investigation and the preliminary investigation report are treated as confidential audit working papers and TEA will seek to withhold them from public release in accordance with the Texas Public Information Act.

We request your full cooperation and a timely response to requests in this investigation. Investigator Gabriella Berger will serve as your point of contact; therefore, please direct any questions to her at (512) 463-9412 or [Gabriella.Berger@tea.texas.gov](mailto:Gabriella.Berger@tea.texas.gov). Please direct any media inquiries to our Communications Division at (512) 463-9000. Please direct any correspondence or inquiry from the school district's attorney to Christopher Jones at 512-463-9720 or by email at [Christopher.Jones@tea.texas.gov](mailto:Christopher.Jones@tea.texas.gov).

Respectfully,



Jason Hewitt, Director  
Special Investigations Unit

CC: A.J. Crabill, Deputy Commissioner, Governance, TEA  
Martin Winchester, Deputy Commissioner, Educator Support, TEA  
Von Byer, General Counsel, TEA  
Chris Jones, Deputy Senior Counsel, TEA  
Jeffrey Cottrill, Director of Governance & Investigations, TEA  
Chris Cowan, Director of Enforcement and Support, TEA